



TN

Department of  
**Human Services**

# Block Grant Report

Tennessee Department of Human Services | January 31, 2021



# Summary

The Department of Human Services (DHS) submits the following report in compliance with the Federal Block Grant Review Act of 1996 per Tenn. Code Ann. § 9-4-5404. The statute requires each state agency responsible for making or recommending decisions on block grants and related topics to issue a written report by February 1 each year to the finance, ways and means committees of the senate; and the finance, ways and means committee of the house of representatives; the health and welfare committee of the senate; the health committee of the house of representatives; the energy, agriculture & natural resources committee of the senate; the agriculture & natural resources committee of the house of representatives; the legislative office of budget analysis; and the governor. This statute further requires that the report detail block grant and federal devolution decisions made or recommended by the agency and how those decisions made or recommended implement or fail to implement the principles outlined in Tenn. Code Ann. § 9-4-5403.

The Department of Human Services has four block grants that are included in this report. They are the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant.

## ***Child Care Development Block Grant***

**Grant Award Amount FY20: \$203,427,388**

**State Share of Match and MOE Amount: \$33,160,452**

**The Child Care and Development Fund State Plan covers a three-year period. Public hearings are conducted to receive feedback during development of the plan. A draft of the plan is made available on the DHS website during development and a final version is posted once the plan is approved by the Office of Child Care. The current Child Care and Development Fund State Plan was submitted on August 29, 2018 with an amendment submitted in December 2019. Amendments specific to COVID activities were submitted in 2020. The current plan remains in effect until September 30, 2021, with intermittent amendments that reflect program/policy updates and federal requirements.**

**Purpose:** Provides funding to implement the requirements that govern the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan, which includes services for children and families, child care assistance for low-income working families, licensing of child care programs, training of

licensing staff and providers, and quality initiatives such as the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) to support children's healthy development and learning. By federal law, a state may not provide assistance to a family whose gross monthly income (before taxes & any other deductions) exceeds 85 percent of the state's median income to be eligible for the program. Parents involved with the Department of Children's Services do not have to be within these income guidelines.

During the 2020 FFY, and in response to COVID, several initiatives were launched using CCDF dollars to assist families with Child Care costs and to alleviate some of the out of pocket Child Care expenses. The Department waived all parent copays and paid up to the maximum established State reimbursement rates. In addition, we paid for child enrollments for families receiving Child Care payment assistance, whether the child was or was not attending to retain the slot for the family and support sustainability for Child Care agencies. The Department extended eligibility periods to minimize stress on the family in redetermining eligibility, as many families had lost employment during this time. The Department also supported pandemic Child Care for essential workers, though payment assistance and establishing a network of temporary Child Care locations for school-aged children through partnership with the YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs. Activities in FFY2020 were supported through both the regular CCDF annual allocation and CARES Act funds.

**Services Provided:**

- Child Care Certificate Program (Child Care payment assistance for income eligible families, including children in foster care)
- Initiatives to Support Equal and Increased Access to Quality Child Care
- Recruitment of Child Care Agencies for Subsidy Participation
- Licensing of Child Care Facilities
- Monitoring for Compliance with Licensing Rules
- Support and Technical Assistance to Child Care Agencies to Meet/Improve Standards
- Quality and Operational Contracts
- Quality Initiatives to Support, Elevate and Strengthen the Early Care and Education System
- Child Care Provider Professional Development & Education
- Child Care Parent Consumer Education
- QRIS Program Assessment
- Child Care Market Rate Study

- Find Child Care Website
- Administration

## ***Community Services Block Grant***

**Grant Award Amount FY20: \$14,524,334**

**The Community Services State Plan is available for public comment on a bi-annual basis. Our structure encourages formal and informal participation of concerned citizens, regulated entities, non-profit agencies, and local governmental officials in the decision-making process. The current plan was submitted on August 30, 2019 and remains in effect until September 30, 2021.**

- The State Plan requires bi-annual public hearings which allow for additional public input into the program and funding decisions. These forums allow any interested party the opportunity for feedback directly to DHS, on all programs and activities.
- DHS partners with a network of twenty (20) local Community Action Agencies (CAAs) that provide programs and services throughout each of the 95 counties with the support of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). CAAs to providing services are private, non-profit, and public organizations. They are governed by a uniquely structured tripartite board of directors, comprised equally of elected public officials, private sector representatives, and low-income representatives. This structure is designed to promote the participation of the entire community in assessing local needs and eliminating the causes and conditions of poverty. CAAs create, coordinate, and deliver an array of comprehensive programs and services to low-income individuals and families. CSBG- funded CAAs are CSBG-eligible entities.

**Purpose:** CSBG is a network aimed at the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient.

Funds support a range of services and activities designed to assist the needs of low-income individuals, including the homeless, and the elderly. CSBG funds enable agencies to provide a range of services designed to assist low-income and homeless individuals achieve self-sufficiency and improve the conditions of the communities in which they live. Agencies conduct community needs assessments every three (3) years that support the development of an annual community action plan, and offer services based on identified local needs.

Approximately 95% of CSBG funds are passed through to the CAAs so they can provide services for individuals who fall below 125% of poverty. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and



the needs of our communities, the CARES Supplemental Act provided that the guideline of 200% of the FPL can be applied to both regular and CSBG CARES Act Supplemental funding. Per the CARES Act, this applies to funds allocated in FFY 2020 and 2021. Every year the funds are allocated to each of the CAAs based upon a formula utilizing the average poverty rate within the past three years for each agency's service areas. CSBG funds are used by DHS to provide services and implement strategies through grants and/or contracts with other private and public agencies.

**Services and Strategies Provided:**

- Employment: Agencies may provide services and/or partner with local resources to increase the number of jobs created, including “living wage” jobs; develop career opportunities, and opportunities for older youth, provide work opportunities, resume’ building, and soft skills development.
- Education and Cognitive Development: Agencies may provide supportive services and/or partner with local resources to increase the number of accredited or licensed affordable child care facilities, increase the number of early childhood or pre-school education assets or resources, increase school readiness, provide early childhood screens, increase the assets and resources for school aged children, youth, and adults to obtain literacy, Adult Basic Education/General Equivalency Diploma, college, or vocational training.
- Income, Infrastructure, and Asset Building: Agencies may provide services and/or partner with local resources to increase the number of assets/resources identified within the community, e.g., technological / communication (e.g. broadband), transportation, recreational (e.g., parks, gardens, libraries), and other public assets and physical improvements. They may decrease the number of abandoned or neglected buildings, the number of predatory lenders/or lending practices, and environmental threats. Agencies may provide assistance to clients to improve their financial well-being, provide financial counseling, i.e., “Your Money, Your Goals” financial literacy program provided through the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; work with clients to retrieve the Earned Income Tax Credit , or open a savings or Individual Development Account.
- Housing: Agencies may provide services and/or partner with local resources to increase the number of safe affordable housing units, support weatherization efforts, address the rates of homelessness, foreclosure rates, increase the rate of home ownership for people with low-incomes, and develop and main shelter beds. Services may include rental and utility assistance.

- Health and Social/Behavioral Development (*includes nutrition*): Agencies may provide services and/or partner with providers to increase affordable health, behavioral and mental health care, increase public safety, food resources, and improve police and community relations. For example, agencies may address the infant mortality rate, teen pregnancy, child abuse and neglect rates, and substance abuse. Services may include vouchers for dental and vision care, transportation to medical appointments, food, and nutrition services.
- Civic Engagement and Community Involvement: Agencies may promote and encourage the community and the customers that they serve to donate their time, resources, and civic engagement through community action, board governance, and leadership.
- Services Supporting Multiple Domains: Agencies provide services and/or partner with local resources to provide services that span or support outcomes achieved across multiple domains for families and individuals, such as case management, transportation, and childcare. CSBG funds may be used to leverage and link services and resources, provide case management and self-sufficiency programs and services.
- Linkages (*e.g., partnerships that support multiple domains*): Agencies may use CSBG funds to leverage and support community initiatives, and information and referral calls.
- Agency Capacity Building: CSBG funds may be used to complete a community needs assessment, strategic plan; as well as provide data management & reporting, and training & technical assistance, etc.
- Other (*e.g., emergency management/disaster relief*): Agencies may use CSBG funds to support emergency management and disaster relief efforts such as fires, floods, tornadoes, etc., and for services or strategies identified through the community needs process, not otherwise listed above, or funded through federal, state, and local resources to meet the needs of low-income individuals.

## ***Social Services Block Grant***

**Grant Award Amount FY19: \$32,799,827**

**The Social Services State Plan is available for public comment on an annual basis. Our structure ensures formal and informal participation of concerned citizens, regulated entities, non-profit agencies, and local governmental officials in the decision-making process. The current plan was submitted on August 24, 2020 and remains in effect until September 30, 2021.**

- Public hearings allow for additional public input into the program and funding decisions. These forums allow any interested party the opportunity to provide feedback to the Department, on programs and activities.
- DHS partners with a network of fifteen local private non-profit, Human Resource

Agencies, and governmental entities that provide programs and services throughout each of the 95 counties with the support of the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

- The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) is administered through contracts with an established network of local non-profit agencies and local governments, serving all 95 counties. The agencies are overseen by local private or public administrative boards.

**Purpose:** The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds are used by the Department of Human Services to support services provided directly by the Department of Human Services staff and through grants/contracts with other public, private, or state agencies to provide Adult Day Services and homemaker services to adults. Services are limited to vulnerable adults who meet federal poverty guidelines or are referred by the DHS Adult Protective Services Program due to allegations of abuse or neglect. Homemaker Services are limited in-home personal care services designed to allow participants to remain in their own residence and maintain independence. The Adult Day Services provide limited services in selected communities. Priority eligibility is given to protective service referrals.

#### **Services Provided:**

Adult Day Services: Grantees provide a structured program of personal care in an approved community-based facility. The activities funded through this grant may include:

- Nutritional services
- Life enrichment activities
- Transportation to and from the program
- Health monitoring
- Speech and hearing therapy
- Physical and psychological examination
- Counseling for the client and/or family
- Work activities or continuing education, as appropriate

Homemaker Services for Adults: Grantees provide a range of services designed to assist low-income individuals to maintain their independence for as long as possible. The activities funded through this grant may include:

- Assistance with limited personal care, such as bathing, toileting, eating, dressing, grooming, and walking
- Help with simple health care routines, such as reminders to maintain diet restrictions and reminders to do recommended exercises
- Performance of routine household chores, such as sweeping, mopping, dusting, making beds, washing dishes, etc.

- Performance of washing, ironing, mending and caring for clothing
- Assistance in obtaining appropriate medical care
- Providing and/or arranging transportation to essential shopping and errands with or for the individual (for example, grocery shopping, having prescriptions filled, paying bills)
- Preparation of and/or providing education about the preparation of nutritious, appetizing meals
- Provision of consumer education and assistance with household budgeting
- Giving assistance and instruction to individuals or caregivers in taking or giving medications
- Provision of assistance in the selection and purchase of items needed to make the home adequate for the individual
- Assisting the individual or caregiver in establishing or improving a home
- Assisting the individual or caregiver in learning to use community resources
- Teaching good grooming and healthy living habits
- Pest control treatment
- Provision of temporary supervision of an individual in his/her own home in the absence of the caregiver in an emergency situation, such as illness of the caregiver or temporary absence of the caregiver
- Conferring with DHS Adult Protective Services Staff

Adult Protective Services: Adult Protective Services staff investigate reports of abuse, neglect (including self-neglect) or financial exploitation of adults who are unable to protect themselves due to a physical or mental limitation. APS staff assess the need for protective services and provide services to reduce the identified risk to the adult.

### ***Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant***

**Grant Award Amount: \$190,891,768**

**MOE Amount: \$88,331,000**

**The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan is a combined State Plan that outlines a four-year strategy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core programs plus one or more of the combined State Plan partner programs. TANF is one of the combined State Plan partners programs included. This plan is submitted by Department of Labor and Workforce Development and includes strategic and operational planning elements as stipulated in Title IV of the Social Security Act and other applicable official issuances of the TDHS. The Plan identifies strategies for coordinating program and services for target populations. Prior to submitting the plan to federal partners for completion, the plan is posted on the Department of Labor and**



**Workforce Development's website for at least thirty (30) days to allow for public comments. Once the State plan is finalized, it is posted on the DHS website for public access. The current plan remains in effect until June 30,2024.**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the TANF Block Grant is to provide temporary assistance to needy families through a workforce development and employment program. Families First is the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, and emphasizes work, training, and personal responsibility. It is temporary and has a primary focus on gaining self-sufficiency through employment. The Families First program helps participants reach this goal by providing temporary cash assistance, transportation, child care assistance, education, job training, employment activities, and other support services.

**Employment and Educational Services Provided:**

The primary goal of the Families First/ TANF partnerships is to move customers and their families towards economic security. This is achieved by having an intentional focus on educational success, workforce development and economic supports, health and well-being, and social capital. The Families First/TANF partners utilize resources to work with all customers and monitor their progress from Families First/TANF to self-sufficiency. Such resources include job readiness, job skills training, and job search, work experience, community service programs, vocational education training, adult education, and employment opportunities. The program reports on outcomes such as educational levels and status, employment status, wages earnings, employment industries, employment gains and retention, increases in weekly employment hours, and cases closed due to an increased earned income.

- Tennessee has established partnerships throughout the State with agencies to assist non-custodial parents' ability to find employment and pay their child support obligations. These partnerships are geared to improving the parenting and communication skills of non-custodians by allowing them to become a greater part of their child's life. Some of the services provided are access to visitation, assisting noncustodial parents re-entering the workforce, assisting parents who cannot pay child support find employment, and other family centered services.

**Support Services Provided:**

- Counseling services for the family and customers with employment barriers needing to be addressed, such as domestic violence, physical or mental health, substance abuse, learning disabilities, and children health or behavioral concerns

- Child Care payment assistance
- Transportation payment assistance
- Trade certification or licensure payment assistance
- Optical and dental services necessary for employment
- Employment and educational milestone incentives
- Mentoring opportunities for children
- Family Enrichment classes
- Transitional Cash Payment assistance
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, TANF was also utilized to offer Emergency Cash Assistance to families experiencing job loss or a reduction in hours as a result of the pandemic.

### **Two Generational Programs:**

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) fosters a Two-Generation (2Gen) Approach to address poverty from a whole-family centered approach that focuses equally and intentionally on services and opportunities for the child and the caregiver in their lives. This approach builds on four (4) components (i.e. education: early childhood and postsecondary, economic assets, health and well-being, social capital) to create a legacy of economic security that can positively impact the next generation and those to follow. Specifically, TDHS is committed to working with internal and external partners to provide coordinated services and achieve the following goals:

- (1) Focus on reducing poverty among children and families using a 2Gen Approach
- (2) Cross-agency collaborations that promote 2Gen partnerships and systems change at the state level
- (3) Create effective pathways to economic opportunity, including access to mainstream education, training and individualized services for those with barriers to employment
- (4) Provide training that promotes a 2Gen approach and help human services staff at all levels of the department serve families more effectively and efficiently
- (5) Ensure that families have access to economic and social supports to support upward mobility, while also assuring healthy child development
- (6) Help families build social capital that can support both resilience and upward mobility
- (7) Engage and listen to the voices of the families.

For additional information about these programs, please visit [www.tn.gov/humanservices](http://www.tn.gov/humanservices).